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AN EARLY AND RARE VIEW OF THE HARBOR.
From an Engraving made about 1650, and now in the St. Augustine Museum.

THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY.

OLD ST. AUGUSTINE.

HER HARBOR COME BACK TO ITS OWN.

(See Frontispiece.)

BY DEWITT WEBB.

Twenty-five years ago the harbor of St. Augustine during society's season was white with the sails of many yachts. There were more than seventy-five of them. Each morning saw them one by one leaving the wharf, each with its own pleasure party, bound for some point on the beach or some place up North river or down the Matanzas. Some returned for lunch, but more were out for the day. Another party would go out in the afternoon for a shorter sail, returning at evening with the rest. The full beauty of the scene came when toward sunset they sailed slowly home in the glow of the setting sun. They sailed slowly, for the wind was going down with the sun, and the reefs taken in in the fresh breeze of the morning were now all shaken out to catch its last light breath before the calm of the evening finally fell. They did not all get to shore at sunset. Generally in the distance as the sun went down one or two idly flapping sails might be seen slowly making their way homeward propelled by an "ash breeze," the natural consequence of some party "from the interior" unaccustomed to the way of the wind in this part of the world, disregarding the warning of the skipper as to the falling of the wind

at sunset. Then over the harbor, as the sun went down, boomed the sunset gun as it had for 300 years; for, from its founding St. Augustine had been a garrison town, and the flag came down for the night as the sound died away.

This was the life and beauty of the harbor for all the years. Every year had seen more graceful yachts built; every year saw more people sail them. Nowhere else was there such safe water; nowhere so few accidents. There were oyster roasts all along the beach, for the skipper could anchor his boat while he went on shore and assisted his sometimes rather green guests in the mystery of cooking these delicate bivalves close to the sea. Then the wanderings by the sea. Every morning if you so desired you could go down to the sea wall by 4:30 and get your fish from the cypress canoe you had seen paddled away from the lagoon the night before.

Then came the spell of the bicycle; golf and tennis; the saddle; and then the larger crowd of people from the west and northwest who were not familiar with the sea and were afraid to venture in the little yachts lest they should capsize. So year by year the fleet grew smaller and one by one the skippers sought other callings, and a sad quiet settled over the harbor. Even the schooners that used to sail from Maine with ice and from New York with merchandise disappeared. The railway had come and their occupation was gone. So year after year the sad quiet grew, and the harbor which had floated the caravels of Ponce de Leon and Laudonniere and Menendez and the buccaneer crafts of Drake and Morgan, for the greater part of the time was without a sail upon its bosom. The shell road in the vicinity of the city had made the carriage ride possible, and so it seemed as if the glory of the harbor had departed forever.

Something else, however, was happening. Almost without observation the East Coast canal, that for twenty-five years had been slowly and under many diffi-

culties making its way, connecting the various arms of the sea along the coast, at last cut through the last barrier, leaving an open waterway from St. Augustine to the Florida keys. The time found the motorboat ready. It had been growing in perfection and speed each year, and so all the way from the little racer to the commodious houseboat the various craft came from the south by the newly opened gateway of the canal and from over the harbor bar from all places north. They were of all classes and dimensions, from the commodious houseboat in which the man and his family carried their home with them wherever fate or fancy might lead, to the tiny racer that seemed just alive for speed. A few carry masts and apologies for sails, but the assistant, the little engine chugging away below, does the work.

Most of the old sailing yachts even have been converted into motors and sail over their old ground with the same sailing master, but with a new motive power less at the mercy and favor of wind and tide. It does not matter, so that we are on the beautiful water.

The general view of the bay has changed less perhaps than any other in the country. There is no more interesting body of water because of the men who have sailed it.

Take a seat some day in a corner of a bastion of the old fort and look seaward. You may see a sail creeping along toward the bar and the inlet. So if you had looked seaward over the sandhills of North beach on that spring day in 1513 you would have seen the ships of Ponce de Leon who, from the place where he had first come ashore a few miles further north, was making his way to the harbor where the inlet and the two arms of the sea reminded him of the holy cross. You can see him sailing away after his brief stay with a fleet of canoes filled with curious Indians from the village which lined the shore for many miles. Then for fifty years the canoes of the Indians alone sailed its sunlit waters. Then

you can see Laudonniere coming to take possession in the name of France. He too, sailed away for the St. Johns and built Fort Caroline. A year or two later the fleet of Menendez appeared and those ships that were light of draft came over the bar and sailing along came to anchor just in front of where you are sitting, and Menendez came ashore where the cacique had his large oblong habitation which he gave Menendez, and the Spaniard at once began to throw his earthworks around it.

This must have been on the very site of the present fort or just west on the reservation. Two days later he went a little way north to a spot you can see and mass was said. This was the first formal religious service within the boundaries of the present United States.

A day or two later Menendez went out with his dispatches for the king to the caravel lying beyond the bar, and even then Ribault's fleet was bearing down upon him and he barely escaped capture by getting inside of the bar just in time, while the caravel with his dispatches for the king sailed away. Even then the September gale was rising and Ribault was forced to sail away before it, and Menendez with the genius of the great commander seized the opportunity to make that memorable march through the woods in the face of the fierce gale to the assault and capture of Fort Caroline, but our tale is only of the harbor and the scenes it has witnessed. It takes no very vivid imagination to recall them, for the change in the setting of the picture has been very slight. The sandhills and the marshes are as they were then, and the waves are dashing over the bar as they were when the larger vessels lay in the offing, unable to cross the bar.

Barely twenty years passed and Sir Francis Drake, with his ships sailing to the Spanish Main, came in to find what he could and nearly destroyed the little town; but there was little booty and so he soon sailed away to seek for richer plunder. And then Morgan, the bucca-

neer, not wishing to overlook anything on his plundering cruise, tried his hand.

After that for long years the quiet of the harbor was broken only when the ships from Spain came to bear troops and food for the colony. Otherwise all the harbor saw were the numerous canoes of the Indians from the large village on the site of what is now known as Casa Cola, eight or nine miles up North river, or from the large village at what is now Du Ponts, near Matanzas, or from the smaller villages between.

In the early summer of 1740 on a peaceful day the sails of the fleet of Gov. Oglethorpe, of Georgia, appeared beyond the bar. The greater number were of too heavy draft and so came to anchor beyond, while the lighter transports, after landing the troops four or five miles below, were able to sail over the bar with cannon and supplies, and the Spanish galleys took refuge near the mouth of the Sabastian well out of harm's way. One can fancy the troops erecting their batteries on Anastasia and on North beach and the beginning of the siege. The fort was completed just as you find it now, and the garrison seemed to have suffered very little from the bombardment.

It must have been of great interest and of little danger to those who stood where you are standing and saw the shots fired from the clump of trees still standing on Anastasia island and saw them harmlessly bury themselves in the walls of the fort. You have yourself seen some of these balls, rusty and rough, still preserved in the old museum down the street. But the early gales warned the commander of the fleet of impending disaster if he should remain off the bar, so the guns were shipped and the anchors weighed, the fleet sailed away and peace once more reigned.

Then the English came again, this time in peace, and in the harbor floated the English ensign. A few years later the Spanish flag again floated to be replaced by the

flag of the United States in 1821. In the long years of peace St. Augustine grew to be a very garden of oranges. Vessels from all along the coast came here for them. It is said as many as thirty vessels might be in the harbor at one time loading with oranges. The great freeze of 1835 destroyed all this and for many years there was no attempt at restoration.

For generations the sunset gun has boomed over the harbor, to be answered by the cry of the marsh hens from every marsh in reach of the sound. The fisherman has gone out in his canoe at night and returned early in the morning with the cargo he sold at the sea wall. And you look from the parapet and see the harbor alive with the motor craft to-day, while the seaward picture is the same as seen by Ponce de Leon or Menendez. St. Augustine harbor has indeed come back to its own.—*Reprinted from Forest and Stream.*

RICHARD KEITH CALL.

BY HIS GRANDDAUGHTER, CAROLINE MAYS BREVARD.

(Conclusion of Article begun in the July Quarterly.)

From the early days of the organization of the Territory of Florida the inevitable struggle between the red and the white man had been foreshadowed. There were collisions and depredations when the white man would venture into the Indian reserves, or when the Indian would venture upon the white man's lands.

In 1826 the Indians became very bold and a whole family was murdered near the plantation of Colonel Achille Murat in Jefferson county, not more than twenty miles from the capital of the Territory. General Call placed himself at the head of a small force to seek out and punish the murderers. Quiet was restored for a while, but at intervals acts of violence and retaliation broke the peace until the outbreaks of 1835 aroused the country.